

Statement on Signing the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 1999

November 30, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2280, the "Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 1999," which provides a 2.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment in benefits for service-disabled veterans and their surviving spouses and children. It provides for increased rates in payments of service-connected disability compensation to veterans who suffer from service-related disabilities and in payments of dependency and indemnity compensation for the surviving spouses and children of service members and veterans whose deaths are service-related. The increased benefit rates will take effect on December 1, 1999. This legislation, derived from an Administration proposal, ensures that the value of these well-deserved benefits will keep pace with increases in consumer prices.

As a country, we must remember those veterans who gave of themselves to assure the continued protection of this great Nation. The freedoms and liberty that we enjoy as citizens depend on the men and women in our Armed Forces. In a tangible way, this legislation expresses the gratitude of the Nation for the sacrifices our veterans have unselfishly endured.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 30, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2280, approved November 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106-118.

Message on the Observance of Hanukkah, 1999

November 30, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Hanukkah.

This joyous Festival of Lights commemorates the rededication of the Jews' Holy Temple by the Maccabees after their victory over oppression and the rekindling of the Temple's sacred oil lamp. That victory, recounted in ancient Jewish writings, is one of history's

earliest recorded battles for religious freedom. More than two thousand years have passed since Judah the Maccabee and his courageous followers refused to reject their faith in God, their customs, and their religious traditions; but today people across the globe still struggle for the freedom to worship according to their own conscience.

As Jews throughout America and around the world gather with family and friends to light the menorah and remember the miracle of God's presence in our lives and history, let us all give thanks for the blessed light of religious freedom in our nation. And let us be mindful, in our thoughts, prayers, and actions, of those who still must live in the shadow of oppression.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a memorable Hanukkah observance and for peace and joy in the coming year.

Bill Clinton

Remarks at a "Stop the Violence" Benefit in Beverly Hills, California

November 30, 1999

Thank you very much. We can pass laws, but we can't fix this podium here. [*Laughter*] Maybe I'll stand up on it, how's that? [*Laughter*]

I love Whoopi Goldberg. The greatest thing about being President is that nearly anybody will come talk to you. [*Laughter*] Some will talk for you; some will talk against you; some will talk at you, but nearly anybody will come talk to you. And so I've had the honor of meeting all kinds of people from all walks of life.

But when I met Whoopi Goldberg—and I was already sort of a big fan, you know—but I looked at her, and I thought, now, there is a woman who will be my friend. [*Laughter*] You know, there have been times when I'm sure my friendship has been somewhat embarrassing to her. [*Laughter*] And times when her jokes have caused me some discomfort in public. [*Laughter*] But I'm not a hypocrite about that. I'm with her through thick and thin. [*Laughter*] And she has certainly been with me though thick and thin.

Of all the people that I know, I continue to be amazed by how generous truly busy